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EDITORIAL

THE WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESS

It gives us pleasure to publish the following letter of Roger H. Williams announcing the dedication to the free use of scientists of the Williams patented process for preparing fossils and other objects for photographing. Paleontologists in particular will appreciate this generous action and will be deeply gratified that the original wish of the inventor of the process, Dr. Henry S. Williams, and the purpose of his son, the proprietor of the patent, are thus consummated. This is but one of many valued contributions to paleontology and geology by Dr. Williams which have placed his colleagues under obligations and have won their high esteem.

T. C. C.

September 12, 1912

Editor of "Journal of Geology":

DEAR SIR: It may be of interest to your readers to know that as of July 1, 1912, there has been dedicated to the free use of science and scientists the patented process for photographic illustrations (U.S. Pat. No. 640,060), owned by the undersigned and known among paleontologists, who found it especially useful in specimen work, as the "Williams Process."

In brief, it consists in the deposition by sublimation on the object to be photographed of an extremely tenuous monochrome film for the purpose of obviating the reflection, refraction, and distorted shadow values common in ordinary photography of certain classes of objects.

It has been a matter of great regret to the writer that a long-continued and expensive investigation, arising out of an entirely legitimate difference as to the scope and validity of the patent, has delayed until now the fulfilment of the original intention of the writer to make this dedication so soon as the expenses incurred in perfecting and establishing the patent should have been secured by the moderate royalties hitherto charged. The outcome of the controversy has entirely justified the writer's position—the opinion of the opposing experts conclusively confirming the fundamental character of the invention.

As one interested in science, the writer would have been pleased if his means had permitted the assumption of all the expenses of this patent without thought

of recoupment, and is heartily sorry that there are those who felt that the failure to do so is culpable. If it is so, I can only plead that it is so in violation of no code with which I am familiar.

In view of the fact that the invention was originally made by my honored father, Dr. Henry Shaler Williams, of Cornell University, it is most desirable that certain facts be stated for the benefit of those who may in the past have been under a misapprehension as to his relation to the patent. Almost immediately after being granted, the patent was transferred from him to me in good faith and in consideration of the assumption of debts incurred in its development. My father's wish always has been that the process should be made freely available to science gratis, and I promised him it should be as soon as its financial situation could be cleared up. It has never yielded a cent of profit to Henry Shaler Williams, nor was it taken over or ever handled with the idea of exploiting science or making commerce of its needs. This cannot be stated too strongly. With the long-drawn-out controversy referred to my father has not only had nothing to do, but has repeatedly endeavored to induce me to abandon it.

Therefore the blame in the matter, if blame there be, is entirely mine and I cheerfully shoulder it; but he should be given complete exoneration from any such charge. Those who have been disposed to think critically of Dr. Williams in connection with the patent have been doing a great and unwarranted injustice to a high-principled man, whose character and whose long and disinterested devotion to science should have made it unnecessary to break the silence he has long maintained, as I now do, without his knowledge, to right a wrong; and, as I sincerely hope, to remove completely any ground for misgiving on the part of any one of his many distinguished friends toward a loyal and worthy colleague.

ROGER H. WILLIAMS